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ANGLICAN CHURCH IN CANADA

IDEAL. ACTUAL. POSSIBLE.

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REV. G. J. LOW, ALMONTE, ONT.

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Mrs. Humphrey Ward's last novel, "The History of David Grieve," contains much food for thought, not only in what it directly states, but in what it suggests. If we read "between the lines" I think we can trace an idea which seems to me characteristic of the Free-thought School to which she belongs; and it is this, "All Christian doctrines are matters of dispute, uncertainty and doubt. Nevertheless a positive faith seems a necessity to most people. If, therefore, a person *must* have a definite religion, he had better accept the whole thing and become a Roman Catholic." I do not say that Mrs. Ward asserts this in so many words, but such, I submit, is the impression that will be left on the mind of the general reader, and such, I conceive, is the aim of the authoress.

We know, of course, that Roman Catholic controversialists have always insisted that there is no logical standing-ground between Rome and Infidelity. But, strange to say, this contention is being largely supported by the Protestant and skeptical world of to-day. It is the contention of Mr. W. H. Malloch in "Is Life Worth Living?" It is hinted at, as we have said, in "David Grieve." Mr. Stead, of the "Review of Reviews," the concoctor of the phrase, "The Non-conformist Conscience," the *claqueur* of General Booth and the Salvation Army, is also the extravagant eulogist of the late Cardinal Manning and of every important movement in the "Italian Mission," while he shows scant courtesy to the "establishment" so-called. An illustration of this tendency was afforded in the controversy on Apostolical Succession which was carried on in *The Mail* between Dr. Langtry, Anglican, and Dr. Johnston, Methodist. The latter closed his case by affirming that if ever he became convinced of the necessity of any Apostolical Succession he would go at once to Rome, where he would be sure to get the real thing.

In many other cases I think I trace, in what we may call the Free-lance literature of to-day, this same disposition to reject any *via media* in religion; and I think I hear more and more clearly the demand: "Give us perfect liberty to tear to pieces everything sacred if we choose, or else give us an absolute spiritual dictatorship. Give us religious anarchy or give us Rome!"

On this platform there is, of course, no standing-ground for us of the Anglican Church. The principle for which we contend—that of a "limited monarchy," of a central authority jealously guarding the deposit of the Faith, and yet in details granting all wholesome liberty to the individual—the principle of allowing plenty of room for intellectual and scientific advance and for national development, while carefully maintaining the continuity of the corporate life—the principle of "Conformity to Type" along with adaptability to "Environment" in our ecclesiastical evolution—this principle, though, to our view, indispensable, and true to both Revelation and Science, is not tolerated.

If we enquire what is the peculiar charm in the Church of Rome for the "Free-lances" of religion, I think we shall find that her attractive power consists, partly in her positive dogmatic character, but chiefly in the great objective fact of her historic continuity, her perennial life. There she is, that Church of Rome, to-day ruling her millions throughout the world from the throne of the Cæsars, there she has been all through the centuries, and there she will be—so the great Puritan historian, Lord Macaulay, informs us—when the New Zealander shall be sitting on a broken arch of London bridge to sketch the ruins of St. Paul's. So it is that puritan and sceptic alike reverence that grand phenomenon of an ever-living Church, with her unbroken testimony all along the ages. For the myth which did duty with many Protestants in a former generation, that after the death of the Twelve Apostles a thick darkness overspread all Christendom, and religion was debased and heathenized, until by chance Luther stumbled upon an original copy of the Bible, and with it started Christianity afresh, so that all the intervening time must, for religious and ecclesiastical purposes, be passed over as of no account and labelled, "The Dark Ages,"—all this myth has been dispelled by the modern philosophical study of history, which traces evolution there, as in everything else. And indeed this grand phenomenon of the perpetual existence of the Catholic Church is—let him confess it or not—a great support and comfort to the troubled Protestant, who mentally relies on that as a *dernier resort* in case his own peculiar theory should break down. And the more so in these times when Protestantism's own special axiom is being torn to

shreds by her own hands. "The Bible and the Bible alone is the religion of Protestants!" What a hollow mockery that sounds to-day, when Protestantism is digging up her own foundation and saying: "The Bible? What is the Bible? Who composed it? Who put it together? Who wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews? What 'John' was it that wrote that fourth gospel so different from the other three? By what authority is this heterogeneous collection of writings imposed on our consciences?" So Protestantism is performing Hari-Kari. She is disembowelling herself with her own sword of private judgment.

No wonder, then, that Evangelical Protestantism, scared at the dangers which threaten her very existence, takes refuge in the thought that after all there is a *custos* of these Biblical documents; that there is a corporation which has never died, since its founder first organized it, long before the New Testament was compiled. We see in modern Protestant literature much more about "The Church" than we used to see; though its ideas as to what constitutes "The Church" are very hazy, and its utterances very confused. The "Church Idea" is taking a more and more definite hold of the conservative puritan mind. For example, compare Prof. Drummond's "Natural Law in the Spiritual World," in which the "Church Idea" was entirely ignored, with his last little brochure, "The Programme of Christianity." What a change we can see from religious individualism to corporate action! It has, apparently, just dawned upon him that our Blessed Lord "founded a society!" We Anglicans well understand that it was the sudden bursting forth of this light, after a long puritan eclipse, that caused such a defection of our divines to Rome some forty years ago. That defection is now arrested, because we have restored this article of the faith, "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church," into its proper setting. But as yet Protestants at large have not learnt to distinguish what is "Catholic" from what is "Roman," and so, looking upon the Church of Rome as the sole exponent of the Catholic idea, they all pay her more or less reverence, from Lord Macaulay down to Mr. Stead.

If such is the attractive power which Rome possesses, what, we ask, is the repellant force which keeps such multitudes of earnest Christians away from her fold? The answer is, the love of liberty, the dread of a one-man power, the horror with which the wolf of the fable views the marks of the collar on the mastiff's neck, the dread lest healthy national and intellectual development should be hampered by the Procrustean bed of Rome's control. That only one language, and a dead one at that, must be used in all our public worship; that only one style of ceremonial must serve for all tastes and temperaments;

that only one dogma must be permitted on every detail, however trivial, for every cast of mind;—all this crushing out of individual thought, this fitting all men into one mould, this incessant dictation on all points, momentous or minute, is intolerable to men of to-day. Just fancy if we Christians were all in submission to the Roman Curia: just fancy if some fine day one of our favorite periodicals, say the *Century Magazine*, or a daily paper, as the *Toronto Mail* or *Montreal Star* (I mention these two because they are avowedly “independent” papers,) should be banished from all our offices and homes, because a telegram had just been received from the Eternal City, that the said publication, on account of some offending article, had been put in the “Index Expurgatorius!” (By the way, that Index must be swollen to enormous dimensions by this time, and the good fathers who have charge thereof must be kept awfully busy.) Just fancy, I say, such a contingency! But, no; that is beyond the utmost stretch of any imagination. It is impossible to imagine all Christians embraced within the Roman fold.

Well then, must the verdict be, “Aut Cæsar aut nullus; either Rome or Free-thought?” Is there no *modus vivendi*? This is the question that is being ventilated by the leaders of Christian Protestant thought to-day and markedly so among the Presbyterians. Dr. Shields, of Princeton, and others in the United States, and Dr. Grant, in Canada, have brought this question to the front. Dr. Grant in his essay entitled “The Church of Canada; can such a thing be?” argues most brilliantly and forcibly for the need of this *modus vivendi*. His contention is: Let us have a National Church; one of course in touch with the past, for the Church of Christ must go back to Christ, must take her departure from Christ, must *date* from Christ; but one also which shall be in touch with the stirring, seething life of Canada to-day, adapting itself to the present surroundings and moulding the nation into a religious coherence, just as the state is moulding it into a civil coherence.

And what is our platform, our programme, as Anglicans? It is just that. That is precisely our ideal. That is precisely the platform which the Anglican Church laid down at the Reformation; and defined in the 34th article. “Every particular or *national* Church hath authority to ordain, change and abolish ceremonies,” &c. Nay, more, it has *always* been her platform, from the time when Gregory the Great started his mission to the Saxons of England, and counselled S. Augustine to adopt as far as possible the customs and usages of the British Church, which was already in the Island. “For,” said he,

"things are not to be loved for the sake of places, but places for the sake of the good things." And so the English Church, adapting itself to the needs and habits of the people, moulded in turn the people into a united realm. At the same time no national Church has authority to tamper with either the faith or the constitution of the Catholic Church. From the beginning of her existence the constitution of the Church provided her—as all constitutions of all societies must needs do—with the means of perpetuating her corporate life, a succession of officers to fulfil the legislative, executive, and judicial functions required by every corporation. But as the Apostolical executive was not confined to St. Peter but devolved on the whole Apostolic College, so we claim that the succession of that Apostolate was not confined to the chair of Rome but devolves on the whole Episcopate; for, as St. Jerome says, "They are all successors of the Apostles." I am not now proving these points. I am simply stating our case. We come before the Canadian world, saying "You are perplexed; you hesitate between the Roman unity and the present religious confusion. You seek a system which will claim all the reverence you rightly give to ancient authority, and which will yet be in accord with modern progress and freedom. We offer you such a system; we are in touch with the past; we have the Catholic Faith, the Catholic Episcopate, the Catholic Scriptures, the Catholic Sacraments, the Catholic Liturgy, the Catholic Year of Sacred Anniversaries; and yet with ample room for liberty of thought in minor matters."

As the mission from Pope Gregory started in England, so the mission from Canterbury started in Upper Canada; but with much difference in favor of the latter. The Church in Canada had not to combat Paganism, but to minister to Christians. The Church came here with every advantage that historical authority and prestige could give, and also with the backing of the state and the endowments of the nation. How did she succeed in moulding the Canadian mind, and forming, according to her ideal, a national Church? Alas! In spite of her advantages, she failed miserably. We are only the fourth among the denominations in numbers or influence. We have lost a large contingent of the English immigration, and we make no gains to speak of. And do we present to the Canadians the spectacle of a solid, united body, adapting itself to the needs of our growing nation? No; not the solidarity which Romanism, or Presbyterianism, or Methodism presents; not a formative influence directing, controlling the nation that is to be, but simply a loose aggregation of dioceses—a thing of shreds and patches, with every diocese working away on its own account—

hampering ourselves with archaic legislation—so timorous of change in our formularies that we are still praying in our Litany for “the Lords of the Council,” whatever that may mean—every diocese surrounding itself with a Chinese wall of “Protection,” tying itself down to its own little “pent-up Utica,” with its own McKinley bills of diocesan finance, in such a way that a clergyman moving from one diocese to another loses all his status, all his past years of service, all his provision for the widow and orphans; for, if a cleric of any standing move from Belleville to Cobourg he is more heavily taxed than a Chinaman entering the United States. And now, thanks to the system of “election” and “calls” to our larger parishes, our diocesanism is dwindling into congregationalism. And yet, while other bodies are consolidating in a way that leaves us far behind, we are singing away :

“ Like a mighty army, moves the Church of God !
We are not divided, all one body we !”

And what is the reason of our failure ? We reply, Because we have not followed the lines of Pope Gregory’s counsel to St. Augustine, which was in effect, study the genius of the people to whom you are sent and adapt yourself to it. The Church must be assimilated to the State, if she in turn would mould the State. For even the Church of Rome is now learning by sad experience, in its own home and in every country, that “the State must be master in its own house.” This lesson of adaptation the Anglican Church in Canada has never learnt, and so she has not progressed as she should have done. In biological terms she has been so careful to preserve her “conformity to type” that she has not allowed herself to be properly “conditioned by her environments,” and so she presents a case of “arrested development.” Instead of being acclimated to her own soil, she still is but a weak offshoot of the English Church—or rather I should say of the Church of *Ireland*, for it is the Irish Churchmen who have remained loyal and true and have kept the Church alive. The bulk of the English emigration no sooner lands in America than it is lost to the Church. Of course I speak of the majority. There are, I am glad to avow, many splendid exceptions. We get some clue as to the reason why the English rustic shakes off his allegiance to the Church when he reaches America by reading an article entitled “Hodge and his Parson,” in the March number of *Nineteenth Century*.

On the other hand, look at our sister church of the United States. Unlike ourselves, she began her course handicapped in every way. Hindered and thwarted by the home authorities in her efforts to complete her organization—hated and suspected as the religion of the

Tories—she is to-day outstripping the other denominations and making her power and influence felt. She is continually drawing the cream of other religious bodies into her own ranks. Why? Because she set herself to Americanize the Church. She threw herself into the national movement; but to do so she had to make a few trifling changes. She called her dioceses after the names of the States, and not after cities. She dropped all redundant titles and offices. But she gained the land. She is moulding the religious thought of the nation to-day to a wonderful extent.

But we—afraid of the slightest change, clinging to old-world notions and habits—are an exotic yet, striving to keep rigidly in the old tracks, yet often forced to swerve by sheer necessity. Our diocesan nomenclature is a curious mixture, some named from cities, and some from lakes and waterfalls. We hang on to every possible title, useful or not, because "it's English, you know; it's English." And so we have become stranded on our respectability and impracticability.

And, now, what is to be done to retrieve as far as possible past mistakes? Let us learn to Canadianize the Church, as St. Augustine and his successors Anglicized it, and as the Protestant Episcopal Church has Americanized it. Let us throw ourselves into the movement now so prominent for the formation of a Canadian nationality, and let us see that our branch of the Catholic Church shall be a prime factor in moulding that nationality. A very important step towards effecting this is now contemplated, viz., the confederation or consolidation of the dissevered Dioceses and Provinces into one whole Canadian Church. Let nothing whatever stand in the way of this consummation so devoutly to be wished. In our discussion of the details let us not be balked by the question, Is it English? Rather let us ask, Is it adapted to Canada and Canadian ways? Is it likely to bring the Church to the front, to make her a formative influence in the nationality that is to be? Or are we content to be for all time merely a hive for ardent, loyal Irishmen and a few stray Englishmen?

The study of ancient ecclesiastical history must convince any one that in the summoning and organization of Councils and Synods, provincial, general or other, the early Church did not act according to one cast-iron rule, but as Dr. Isaac Barrow says, "upon prudential reasons, according to the exigency of things," or in the words of the 34th Article, "According to the diversities of countries, times and men's manners." Again, in mapping out the ecclesiastical territory into patriarchates, primacies, and so forth, they very wisely followed the lines laid down by the civil government of the Roman Empire. In

the words of Dr. Barrow : "In defuining such precincts it was most natural, most easy, most cominodious, to follow the divisions of territory of jurisdiction already established in the civil state; that the spiritual administrations, being in such circumstances aptly conformed to the secular, might go on more smoothly and expeditely, the wheels of one not clashing with the other; according to the judgment of the two great synods, that of Chalcedon and the Trullane." ("Treaty on the Pope's Supremacy," Supposition V., Section X.)

In short, they were guided by what our Methodist brethren call "sanctified common sense." Let us learn that lesson from the Primitive Church; let us follow that precedent. We want one consolidated Church throughout the length and breadth of the Dominion to be represented by one central gathering. When, where, how often that central gathering, that National Council shall meet, is a subject for discussion—what the President of that Council shall be entitled, is another—what are the subjects with which the Council shall deal, is another. For my part I don't think we can much improve on the programme laid down in Winnipeg at the Conference of August, 1890. We also want our diocesan synods as now. And between these two we want Provincial Councils. But I would like to see a modification here. Why should we not have if not more, at least *three*, Provinces, one for the East, one for the West, and one for the centre? And then let that central ecclesiastical province be coterminous with the civil Province of Ontario according to the ancient custom. Then we should have the five dioceses (which will be increased before long), comprising the old Diocese of Toronto, consolidated into a homogeneous, compact, workable Province. Many of our beneficiary funds could be managed in common. We, Churchmen, should then be more in touch with one another; we should cultivate a broader spirit, and feel that nothing in our own civil province at least was alien to us. But as it is, we are divided in every way. We have half-a-dozen little rival papers instead of one good one; we have half-a-dozen little competing colleges instead of supporting one good university. The Methodists are far wiser in this respect than we are; they do not dissipate their energies. As things are now, every division of a diocese means a further disintegration and decentralization, and therefore to be deprecated. To be sure we have a Provincial Synod, which is intended to bind us together, but what does that amount to? Once in three years a few gentlemen from each diocese meet together and have a talk; then they return home, and for the next three years the several dioceses see nothing of each other, hear nothing of each other, and care

nothing for each other. If, as it is now talked of, our own diocese should be divided and a bishop appointed for Ottawa, that will mean the building of another Chinese wall between those of the East and of the West; we shall have no more interest in each other than we have now in the Diocese of Toronto; the men of the one Diocese will have no longer any brotherly intercourse with those of the other in the way of missionary deputations, &c. If a vacancy occur in the Diocese of Kingston the clergy of Ottawa will have no chance for preferment, and *vice versa*.

In short, our "pent-up Utica" would become more pent up still. No doubt as compensation we should have another little Divinity school started, and another batch of dignitaries created—Deans, Archdeacons, Canons, Prebendaries and the like. But, inasmuch as a Canadian diocese, with its eighty or ninety clergy, has almost as many titled individuals as an English diocese, with its 800 or 900 clergy, I fear our Canadian dignitaries will become as numerous as American colonels.

Is there any other religious body—Presbyterian, Methodist or other—that would consent to be split up into such fragments? Is there any other profession whose members would allow their chances in life and their scope of work to be tied down to a county or two?

A proper *Provincial system* for Ontario might obviate all these embarrassments. If each diocese must have its own protective system, at least we might arrange for some reciprocity in the raw materials. Tax the manufactured article if you please; put a duty on all MSS. sermons and addresses 35% or 70% *ad valorem* when it crosses the diocesan frontier, but let the raw material, the parson himself, in free. By carrying out such a scheme as that indicated we should be much more of a power than we are now; a clergyman could say *Civis Romanus sum* anywhere within the bounds of his own civil province, and not be treated as an alien if he crossed the diocesan border. By following this line, and it seems to me only this line, there is a possibility that the Anglican mission in Canada may yet realize her ideal.

"Oh, pray for the peace of Jerusalem," and let us not only pray, but think and work. And may the blessing of God so attend our prayers, our deliberations and our acts, that we may in the near future be able to point with pride to the condition of the Church from the Atlantic to the Pacific and say "Walk about Zion and go round about her, and tell the towers thereof, 'Jerusalem is built as a city that is at unity in itself.'"

